



[Blade Nzimande](#); [Jeremy Cronin](#)

Transformation, Not a Balancing Act

The main text of this part is still Joe Slovo's "The SA Working Class and the NDR". The supporting texts begin with "We Need Transformation, Not a Balancing Act" (attached, and linked below), published nine years after Slovo's pamphlet, in 1997, the year following the beginning of what has since become known as the "1996 Class Project", of which this document is an initial critique.

In the mean time, the SACP and the ANC had been legalised in 1990, the UDF had been disbanded, the CODESA talks had taken place, SACP General Secretary Chris Hani had been assassinated, the ANC had been elected to government in 1994, and Joe Slovo had passed away, on 6 January 1995. All of this triumph and tragedy, and a lot more, constituted part of the National Democratic Revolution, not least the building of the ANC and the SACP as legal, open, organised structures around this large country with its population of approximately 40

million in the mid-1990s (now well over 54 million).

This SACP document looked at a number of other documents published at that time, including from the ANC Youth League, from COSATU, and from the SACP itself, but in particular from the ANC in the form of a November, 1996 document called “[The State and Social Transformation](#)” (note that the Young Communist League was not re-established until 2003).

Nzimande and Cronin were saying that the ANC document stood out from the others in terms of its class-neutral “balancing act” approach. They conclude that the document should rather have been called “The State and Social Accommodation”.

Another way of putting this would be to say that the ANC document in question was selling class collaboration, and not class alliance. “The State and Social Transformation” was selling the end of class struggle instead of the prosecution of the class struggle by alliance with favourable forces, and against unfavourable forces.

There is a difficulty in Nzimande’s and Cronin’s document. On the third page, under “Dealing with capital”, two conceptions of capital are described: “factors of production” and “capital meaning capitalists”. The authors say that in the ANC document these two conceptions are elided or confused, giving the impression that factors of production can only come attached to capitalists, which is not so.

That is all well and good, but what is absent is the understanding of capital as a dynamic relationship, and the “accumulation” of capital as being the reproduction of that relationship and of all of the support to that relationship, including the grooming of the working class and the dominance of banks and markets.

Even in terms of pure money, what the capitalist essentially does with it is to throw it into circulation, not hoard it. Unlike the accumulated wealth of the miser, which is not capital, though it may be money.

The circulation of money as capital proceeds via the purchase of labour-power and the extraction of surplus-value. Therefore, we do not escape the reproduction of capital by making the state the owner of the capital.

The revolutionary escape from capital is achieved by accumulating the prerequisites of socialism, which mainly consist of the ever-increasing ability of masses of people to resolve and act together, consciously, and scientifically. This is the “Democratic” part of the National Democratic Revolution.

Nzimande’s and Cronin’s document does arrive at this point. It does, at the end, confirm that the free-willing collective Subject is both the maker and the product of revolution.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Transformation not a balancing act, 1997, Nzimande and Cronin.](#)
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